

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 13, 2020

Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

We are respectfully requesting \$40 million for the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence grant program in the Fiscal Year 2021 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Operated under Title II of the Higher Education Act, this program is authorized to provide competitive grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and other Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) that have been instrumental in educating our nation's racially and ethnically diverse teachers. Through the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence grant program these institutions of higher education will have the additional resources they need to continue preparing current and future teachers and school leaders to be profession-ready, certified, and licensed.

HBCUs, TCUs, and MSIs, collectively, award only 11% of the nation's bachelor's degrees in education, yet they produce more than 50% of the bachelor's degrees earned in education by Hispanic, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students.ⁱ HBCUs graduate approximately 50% of the nation's African American teachers with bachelor's degrees.ⁱⁱ HSIs prepare 90% of Hispanic teachers, and along with other MSIs, constitute a vital pipeline to maintain diversity among our nation's teachers.ⁱⁱⁱ We should continue to support the organizations that are already doing a great job at producing our nation's racially and ethnically diverse teachers.

There are clear benefits to having a teaching workforce that reflects our nation's population. Research shows that all students benefit from having diverse teachers. This is especially true for students of color who demonstrate greater academic achievement and social and emotional development in classes with teachers of color.^{iv} Studies show that Black teachers are more likely to recommend high-achieving Black students for talented and gifted programs, which eliminates

the gap in access to these programs.^v Research also indicates that racially diverse students perform better in school when they have had at least one same race teacher.^{vi} Yet, 80% of the United States teaching workforce identifies as white, while 40 percent of people and over half of all students in the United States identify as non-white.^{vii} We must invest in the strategies and interventions that have proven to be effective at producing a racially and ethnically diverse teaching workforce.

In addition to diversifying the teacher workforce, investing funds into MSI teacher preparation programs will help build new professional pipelines for qualified teachers and help combat the nationwide teacher shortage crisis. Data shows this nationwide shortage is growing and could reach 200,000 by 2025.^{viii} Opening up teaching career opportunities for historically underrepresented demographics represents one way to combat this shortage. Additionally, studies have indicated that the most severe teacher shortages occur in underfunded and majority-minority school districts^{ix} – the same districts that stand to benefit most from a more diverse teacher workforce.

The Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence Grant program under Title II of the HEA would provide critical funding to HBCUs, TCUs, HSIs and other MSIs that can be used to enhance educator preparation programs by providing extensive clinical experience amongst other things. This funding can also be used to provide financial aid to prospective teachers which helps to eliminate a key barrier to a diverse educator workforce as students of color are more heavily impacted by the high cost of college and student loan debt.^x Investing in this grant program is key to producing a diverse teaching workforce that better reflects our nation's student population. However, this important program has unfortunately not been funded since its original authorization.

Therefore, we are asking for long overdue funding for the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence grant program to be appropriated at \$40 million in the FY 2021 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,



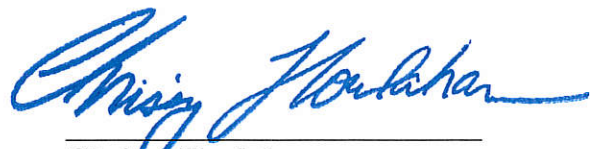
Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



Gil Cisneros
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress

Member of Congress

**Supporting Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence grant programs, under Title II of
the Higher Education Act**

List of Signatories

March 13, 2020

Abigail D. Spanberger
A. Donald McEachin
Alcee L. Hastings
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Ann McLane Kuster
Ayanna Pressley
Ben Ray Luján
Bennie G. Thompson
Chrissy Houlahan
Danny K. Davis
David Trone
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Frank Pallone, Jr.
Gil Cisneros
G. K. Butterfield
Jahana Hayes
Jesús G. “Chuy” García
Jimmy Gomez
Jimmy Panetta
Julia Brownley
Kathy Castor
Kendra S. Horn
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Mark DeSaulnier
Mary Gay Scanlon
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Ruben Gallego
Steven Horsford
Susan Davis
Sylvia R. Garcia
Ted W. Lieu
Tony Cárdenas

ⁱ Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity, “Homepage,” available at <https://www.educatordiversity.org/>

ⁱⁱ Jacqueline Jordan Irvine and Leslie T. Fenwick, “Teachers and Teaching for the New Millennium: The Role of HBCUs,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 80 (3) (2011): 197–208, available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41341128>; National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education: Comments to the Department of Education proposed rule changes for teacher preparation programs available at: http://nafeonation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/NADEC_Teacher_Prep_Regulations_Discussion_Document_2-2-15_.pdf.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, “Teacher Diversity,” <https://www.hacuvadvocates.net/teacherdiversity?1>.

^{iv} Carver-Thomas, D. (2018). *Diversifying the teaching profession: How to recruit and retain teachers of color*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

^v Jill Barshay, “Bright Black Students Taught by Black Teachers Are More Likely to Get Into Gifted-and-Talented Classrooms,” *The Hechinger Report*, January 19, 2016, available at <https://hechingerreport.org/bright-black-students-who-are-taught-by-black-teachers-are-more-likely-to-get-into-gifted-and-talented-classrooms/>; Baskerville, Lezli et al., “The Role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Faculty Diversity in American Federation of Teachers,” *American Educator*, www.aft.org.

^{vi} David Figlio, “The Importance of a Diverse Teaching Force” (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2017), available at <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-importance-of-a-diverse-teaching-force/>.

^{vii} American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, “AACTE Releases First National Data Report on Teach Preparation Profession,” Press release, March 20, 2013, available at <https://aacte.org/2013/03/aacte-releases-first-national-data-report-on-teacher-preparation-profession/>.

^{viii} Emma Garcia and Elaine Weiss, “The teacher shortage is real, large and growing, and worse than we thought,” <https://www.epi.org/publication/the-teacher-shortage-is-real-large-and-growing-and-worse-than-we-thought-the-first-report-in-the-perfect-storm-in-the-teacher-labor-market-series/>

^{ix} Alex Baptiste, “Impact of Illinois teacher shortage hits vulnerable students hardest,” <https://www.advanceillinois.org/2017/12/impact-illinois-teacher-shortage-hits-vulnerable-students-hardest/>

^x Carver-Thomas, D. (2018). *Diversifying the teaching profession: How to recruit and retain teachers of color*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute; Bayliss Fiddiman, Colleen Campbell, and Lisette Partelow, “Student Debt: An Overlooked Barrier to Increasing Teacher Diversity,” July 2019 Center for American Progress <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-postsecondary/reports/2019/07/09/471850/student-debt-overlooked-barrier-increasing-teacher-diversity/>.